

U.S. Patent Application No.: 10/719,780
Filing Date: November 21, 2003
Response dated November 21, 2005

PATENT
Attorney Docket No. 713-56-PA

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This paper is submitted in response to the Office Action mailed August 22, 2005.
Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-14 were examined. Claims 1 and 11-13 were rejected as unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by US 4,657,439 – Petersen. Claims 2-10 and 14 were objected to as depending from rejected claims, but were held to define patentable subject matter.

By this amendment, claims 1 and 2 have been canceled, and their subject matter has been incorporated into new claim 15. Claims 3-10 have been amended to depend from new claim 15 and to conform their terminology to that of the new independent claim. It is therefore respectfully submitted that new independent claim 15, and dependent claims 3-10, as amended, are allowable over the art of record.

Claim 13 has been amended by defining the second step as that of “at least partially submerging a buoyancy can in the water adjacent to the riser,” and by defining the third step as that of “urging the can laterally toward the riser.” This third step, especially, distinguishes the claimed invention from the cited reference.

In the Petersen reference, the buoyancy cans are captured in the platform’s vertical openings 16, where they are held stationary and cannot be moved. Thus, in installing the cans on the risers, the cans must first be installed in the platform openings 16, with the axial slots 36 of the cans aligned with riser slot openings 43 that extend from the moon pool 42. Then the risers must be moved from the moon pool into the axial slots 36 through the riser slot openings 43.

In the claimed invention, by contrast, the buoyancy can is not captured or constrained within a platform. Thus, the can is free to be moved laterally to be installed on the riser, as now defined in amended claim 13. Indeed, the freedom to move the can in the claimed invention offers an

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advantage over the Petersen method, in that there is no need for a platform to perform the claimed method, thereby simplifying the installation procedure.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claim 13, as amended, defines patentably over the cited reference, and should be allowed along with dependent claim 14.

In summary, it is respectfully submitted that claims 3-15, as amended, are patentable over the art of record and should be allowed. Passage of the application to issue is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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